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**CLAIMS** 

1. A method for configuration management for a computing device, comprising the steps of:

providing available software to said computing device through an 4 interface;

determining whether or not resident software stored in a storage device associated with said computing device is authenticated; and

loading said available software into said storage device if said resident software has not been authenticated.

- 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
  determining whether or not said available software is authenticated;
  rejecting said available software if said resident software is authenticated
  and said available software is not authenticated; and
- loading said available software if said resident software is authenticated and said available software is authenticated.
- 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining whether or not said resident software is authenticated comprises the steps of:

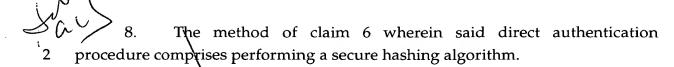
determining whether or not an authentication flag has been set;

- wherein said resident software is determined to be authenticated if said authentication flag has been set; otherwise
- 6 said resident software is determined to be unauthenticated.
- 4. The method of claim 3 wherein said authentication flag is set when authenticated software has been loaded onto said computing device.
- 5. The method of claim 3 wherein said authentication flag is set by a service technician.
- 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining whether or not said resident software is authenticated comprises the step of performing a direct authentication procedure on said resident software.
- 7. The method of claim 6 wherein said direct authentication procedure comprises performing a cyclic redundancy check.

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9. An apparatus for performing configuration management for a computing device, comprising:

an interface for providing available software to said computing device;

- a storage device for storing resident software and a set of executable computer instructions for determining whether or not said resident software is authenticated;
- a processor for executing said set of executable computer instructions and for loading said available software if said resident software is authenticated.
  - 10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein:
  - said set of executable computer instructions is further for determining whether of not said available software is authenticated;
  - said processor is further for rejecting said available software if said resident software has been authenticated and said available software is not authenticated; and
  - said processor is further for loading said available software if said resident software is authenticated and said available software is authenticated.
    - 11. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein
- said storage device is further for storing an authentication flag for indicating the authentication status of said computing device; and
- said processor is further for determining whether or not said resident software is authenticated based on said authentication flag.
- 12. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said authentication flag is set when authenticated software is loaded onto said computing device.
- 13. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said authentication flag is set 2 by a service technician.
- 14. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said processor is further for performing a direct authentication procedure on said resident software to determine whether or not said resident software is authenticated.

15. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said direct authentication 2 procedure comprises performing a cyclic redundancy check.

16. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said direct authentication 2 procedure comprises performing a secure hashing algorithm.

and